

Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L EC BRUSSELS 02251

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: EEC
SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL, MARCH 8, 1977: WESTERN SUMMIT

1. THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS WERE UNABLE, DURING THEIR MARCH 8 COUNCIL SESSION, TO ARRIVE AT A CONSENSUS ON EC COMMISSION PRESIDENT ROY JENKINS' PARTICIPATION IN THE MAY 7-8 WESTERN SUMMIT. (ACCORDING TO A UK PERM DEL SOURCE (GORE-BOOTH), UKREP SIR DONALD MAITLAND (THE COREPER CHAIRMAN) SOLICITED MEMBER STATE VIEWS MARCH 3 ON PARTICIPATION OF THE COMMUNITY AS SUCH IN THE SUMMIT, RECEIVING POSITIVE REPLIES FROM ALL BUT THE FRENCH, WHO CLAIMED TO BE UNINSTRUCTED.)

2. GORE-BOOTH SAID THAT FRENCH FOREIGN MINISTER DE GUIRIN-GAUD INFORMED THE MARCH 8 COUNCIL THAT HIS GOVERNMENT DID NOT CONSIDER IT APPROPRIATE THAT AN INTERNATIONAL BODY SHOULD BE REPRESENTED AT THE SUMMIT; ONLY INDIVIDUAL STATES SHOULD TAKE PART. GORE-BOOTH CONFIRMED THAT FRENCH PRESIDENT GISCARD HAD TAKEN THIS SAME LINE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH JENKINS TWO WEEKS AGO IN PARIS.

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3. ANOTHER COUNCIL SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT REACTION TO DE GUIRINGAUD'S STATEMENT WAS LOUD AND FORCEFUL. FRG FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER AND ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER FORLANI BOTH RESTATED THEIR GOVERNMENTS' POSITIONS INFAVOR OF EC REPRESENTATION AT THE SUMMIT BY BOTH THE COMMISSION PRESIDENT, WHO WOULD

SPEAK ON ISSUES INVOLVING EC COMPETENCE, AND THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT. THE SMALLER MEMBER STATES ALSO OBJECTED TO THE FRENCH POSITION. ACCORDING TO THIS SOURCE, DUTCH FOREIGN MINISTER VAN DER STOEL SAID IT WAS "OUTRAGEOUS" THAT THE US COULD ACCEPT COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION, WHILE STATES COULD NOT.

4. UK FOREIGN SECRETARY OWEN (THE COUNCIL PRESIDENT) TOLD REPORTERS THAT THE MINISTERS HAD DECIDED TO REFER THE ISSUE OF JENKINS' PARTICIPATION TO THE MARCH 25-26 ROME EUROPEAN COUNCIL. GORE-BOOTH HAS POINTED OUT TO US, HOWEVER, THAT GISCARD WILL HAVE A FALLBACK POSITION IN ROME. EVEN IF HE AGREES TO EC PARTICIPATION AS SUCH IN THE SUMMIT, HE CAN HOLD THE LINE AT ACCEPTING REPRESENTATION BY THE COUNCIL PRESIDENCY -- UK PRIME MINISTER CALLAGHAN.

5. OWEN TOLD THE PRESS AFTER THE MEETING THAT HMG WAS "PREPARED TO ACCEPT WHATEVER CONSENSUS MIGHT EMERGE WITHIN THE COUNCIL" WITH RESPECT TO JENKINS' PARTICIPATION. UK MINISTER OF STATE FRANK JUDD (WHO REPRESENTED THE UK IN COUNCIL DEBATE) ECHOED OWEN'S LINE, TELLING REPORTERS THAT HMG HAS NO "ABSOLUTIST FUNDAMENTAL VIEWS" ON THE ISSUE, WANTING TO TAKE INTO ACCOUNT ALL DIFFERING POSITIONS. HE SAID THAT HMG TAKES THE VIEW THAT TO EXTEND SUMMIT PARTICIPATION BEYOND ITS PRESENT LIMITED SCOPE WOULD BE TO CHANGE THE NATURE OF THE SUMMIT ITSELF AND THAT HMG THEREFORE WISHES TO BE SURE THAT SUCH EXTENSION WOULD BE ON THE BASIS OF A COMMON EC VIEW. JUDD SAID THAT CONFIDENTIAL

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THE MARCH 8 LONDON ANNOUNCEMENT ON THE SUMMIT HAD BEEN MADE ONLY AFTER THE DISCUSSIONS IN BRUSSELS MADE IT CLEAR NO CONSENSUS ON COMMISSION PARTICIPATION WOULD BE REACHED AND THAT THE EXCLUSION OF THE COMMISSION FROM THE LIST OF INVITED PARTICIPANTS "REFLECTS THE SITUATION AS IT NOW EXISTS." HE ADDED THAT "THERE IS STILL A LOT OF WORK TO BE DONE" AND THAT "THE IMPORTANT THING IS TO GET A COMMON POSITION IN THE EC AS A WHOLE. HINTON

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